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**DEMOCRATS LAUNCH EFFORT ON BEHALF
OF DISABLED MILITARY RETIREES AND VETERANS IN ILLINOIS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined Democrats in an effort to force the Republican Leadership in the House to schedule a vote on legislation that would authorize full payment of both retirement pay and disability compensation to half a million disabled military retirees.□ □

Currently, veterans who retire with 20 years of honorable service, and who have a service-related disability, are not permitted to collect both retirement and disability pay concurrently.

□ Schakowsky signed a "discharge petition" on H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2003.□ A discharge petition is a parliamentary tool that allows a majority of members, 218, to force a bill that is being bottled-up in committee onto the House floor for debate.□ H.R. 303 is cosponsored by 322 members, both Republican and Democrat.

"Veterans who suffered an injury while on active duty protecting and securing our nation have fully earned their right to be compensated without penalty.□ Denying our veterans the right to collect both retirement and disability pay is an injustice that must Congress must rectify," Schakowsky said.□ □

She added, "This issue is on top of the priority list for veterans in the 9th Congressional District and signing the discharge petition is first step in the fight to make sure that the House acts to help disabled veterans now," Schakowsky said.

The Senate already passed the concurrent receipts provision last week.

Schakowsky has also joined the Democrats to announce a proposal to roll back health care cost increases imposed by the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress, to expand health care access for veterans and educational opportunities for reservists, and to provide cash bonuses to soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.□ In addition, families of those killed on active duty would receive higher benefits under the Democratic proposal.